

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The listing below of the claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the present application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A rain gutter assembly for collecting surface water runoff from a building roof without clogging of the gutter by leaves and other debris, said rain gutter comprising:

a) a substantially U-shaped, elongated gutter for placement along and adjacent to a sloping roof of a building for collecting rain water runoff from the roof, the gutter including a rear wall that is adapted to abut a substantially vertical building surface adjacent to an edge of the roof, a bottom wall extending substantially perpendicularly from the rear wall, and a front wall extending upwardly from a front edge of the bottom wall, wherein the rear wall, the bottom wall, and the front wall together define a U-shaped channel having an upwardly-facing opening, the front wall having a vertical height that is less than that of the rear wall and including at its uppermost edge an inwardly-extending lip;

b) at least two support brackets positioned within and spaced from each other along the gutter channel and including at least one passageway for receiving a connector for connecting the bracket and gutter to the building surface, the brackets extending across the gutter channel and between and engaging each of the gutter rear wall and the gutter front wall [[:]] and including:

1) a substantially L-shaped body including a first leg adapted to be oriented substantially vertically when the bracket is installed in the gutter, and a second leg adapted to be oriented substantially horizontally when the bracket is installed in the gutter, the first leg including a mounting surface adapted to contact the rear wall of the gutter;

2) at least one first passageway extending through the first leg toward the mounting surface and generally aligned with the second leg for receiving a connector for connecting the bracket and gutter to a substantially vertical building surface adjacent to a roof edge;

3) engagement means carried by the second leg for engaging and supporting a front wall portion of a gutter; and

4) cover support means carried by the first leg for contacting a downwardly-facing surface at a rear portion of a gutter cover, wherein the cover support means is an upwardly-facing, flat support surface inclined in a downward direction from a plane defined by the mounting surface and extending toward the gutter front wall engagement means; and

c) a gutter cover overlying the gutter opening and supported by the at least two brackets, wherein the cover includes a plate-like cover body that overlies and is spaced above the gutter opening, a rear wall extending along a rear edge of the cover body and defining a contact surface ~~for contacting~~ that contacts the gutter rear wall, and an intumed front wall that defines a curved front surface of the cover body and that terminates at a front edge of the cover body^{**} that lies between the gutter front wall and the gutter rear wall, wherein the front

edge of the cover body is ~~secured to~~ supported by the at least two brackets, and wherein the cover body rear wall and gutter rear wall are adapted to be jointly secured to the building surface by a fastener that extends through both the cover body wall and the gutter rear wall.

Claim 2 (original): A rain gutter in accordance with claim 1, wherein the gutter rear wall has an uppermost end that is folded over to define a slot that receives the cover rear wall.

Claim 3 (currently amended): A rain gutter in accordance with claim 1, wherein the gutter front wall includes a reentrant flange extending toward the gutter front wall.

Claim 4 (currently amended): A rain gutter in accordance with claim 3, wherein the reentrant flange engages ~~front ends~~ the engagement means of the second legs of each of the brackets.

Claim 5 (currently amended): A rain gutter in accordance with claim 4, wherein the ~~bracket front ends~~ engagement means include a reentrant flange that extends in an opposite direction to that of the gutter front wall reentrant flange to support the gutter front wall portion in a vertical direction.

Claim 6 (canceled)

Claim 7 (original): A rain gutter in accordance with claim 1, wherein the front surface of the cover body is spaced from the gutter front wall to define a gap therebetween into which water can flow from the cover upper surface into the gutter channel.

Claim 8 (original): A rain gutter in accordance with claim 7, wherein the gap has an opening of from about $\frac{1}{4}$ in. to about $\frac{1}{2}$ in.

Claim 9 (original): A rain gutter in accordance with claim 1, wherein the front surface of the cover body overlies the gutter lip to block leaves and debris from entering the gutter channel.

Claim 10 (canceled)

Claim 11 (currently amended): A rain gutter in accordance with claim ~~10~~ 1, wherein the first leg includes at least two first ~~bore~~ passageways.

Claim 12 (currently amended): A rain gutter in accordance with claim ~~10~~ 1, wherein the at least one second bore is a blind bore.

Claim 13 (currently amended): A rain gutter in accordance with claim ~~40~~ 1, wherein the engagement means is a hook member that is adapted to engage a reentrant lip carried at an upper front edge of a gutter.

Claim 14 (canceled)

Claim 15 (currently amended): A rain gutter in accordance with claim ~~44~~ 1, wherein the cover support ~~means~~ surface is inclined at an inclination angle of from about 85° to about 60° relative to the mounting surface.

Claim 16 (currently amended): A rain gutter in accordance with claim ~~44~~ 1, wherein the cover support ~~means~~ surface is inclined relative to the mounting surface at an inclination angle of about 75°.

Claim 17 (currently amended): A rain gutter in accordance with claim ~~40~~ 1, including a stop surface carried by the second leg for abutment with and for positioning relative to the bracket of a front edge of a the gutter cover.

Claim 18 (original): A rain gutter in accordance with claim 17, wherein the stop surface is positioned below an opening of the at least one second bore.

Claim 19 (currently amended): A rain gutter in accordance with claim 40 1, including at least one aperture in the bracket body for receiving a fastener for fastening an end cap ~~relative to the~~ an adjacent bracket.

Claim 20 (original): A rain gutter in accordance with claim 19, wherein the at least one bracket body aperture is positioned in the first leg.

Claim 21 (original): A rain gutter in accordance with claim 19, wherein the at least one bracket body aperture is positioned in the second leg.

Claim 22 (original): A rain gutter in accordance with claim 19, wherein at least one bracket body aperture is positioned in the first leg, and at least one bracket body aperture is positioned in the second leg.

Claim 23 (currently amended): A rain gutter in accordance with claim 1, including a gutter end cap comprising:

a) an end panel having an inner surface and an outer surface and including a perimeter having a predetermined shape;

b) first connection means carried by the end panel for connecting the end cap with an end of a the gutter; and

c) second connection means carried by the end panel for connecting the end cap with a an adjacent support bracket carried within the gutter.

Claim 24 (currently amended): A rain gutter in accordance with claim 23, wherein the first connection means includes an outer peripheral wall extending laterally outwardly from the inner face of the end panel and an inner peripheral wall extending laterally outwardly from the inner face of the end panel and positioned inwardly of the outer peripheral wall to define therebetween a connection slot for connecting the end cap with and end of a the gutter.

Claim 25 (original): A rain gutter in accordance with claim 24, wherein the outer peripheral wall defines an end cap top wall, an end cap rear wall, an end cap bottom wall, and an end cap front wall.

Claim 26 (original): A rain gutter in accordance with claim 25, wherein the outer peripheral wall is substantially continuous.

Claim 27 (original): A rain gutter in accordance with claim 26, wherein the outer peripheral wall and the inner peripheral wall are substantially perpendicular to the end panel inner surface.

Claim 28 (original): A rain gutter in accordance with claim 27, wherein the inner peripheral wall extends laterally outwardly from the end panel inner surface a greater distance than the outer peripheral wall

Claim 29 (currently amended): A rain gutter in accordance with claim 26, wherein the outer peripheral wall includes a gap between the end cap top wall and the end cap rear wall to receive a portion of the gutter rear wall ~~panel~~ portion.

Claim 30 (original): A rain gutter in accordance with claim 25, wherein the inner peripheral wall extends substantially along and parallel to the end cap front wall, the end cap bottom wall, and the end cap rear wall.

Claim 31 (original): A rain gutter in accordance with claim 30, wherein the inner peripheral wall extends along the end cap rear wall from a point between the end cap top wall and the end cap bottom wall, along the end cap bottom wall, and along the end cap front wall to a point between the end cap top wall and the end cap bottom wall.

Claim 32 (currently amended): A rain gutter in accordance with claim 23, wherein the second connection means includes at least one aperture in the end panel for receiving a connecting member for connection with the adjacent support bracket.

Claim 33 (currently amended): A rain gutter in accordance with claim 23, wherein the second connection means includes a projection extending outwardly from the end panel inner surface for contacting the adjacent support bracket.

Claim 34 (currently amended): A rain gutter in accordance with claim 33, wherein the projection includes a passageway for receiving a connecting member that interconnects the end cap with the adjacent support bracket.

Claim 35 (currently amended): A rain gutter in accordance with claim 33, wherein the projection terminates in a connector engageable with the adjacent support bracket.

Claim 36 (currently amended): A rain gutter in accordance with claim 1, including a rain gutter end cap comprising: a first, gutter-trough closure region for blocking water flow from a gutter end, and a second, above-trough closure region for blocking entry of debris between a the gutter and ~~an~~ the overlying cover panel.

Claim 37 (new): A rain gutter in accordance with claim 1, wherein the front edge of the cover body is secured to the at least two support brackets.

Claim 38 (new): A rain gutter in accordance with claim 1, including at least one second bore extending into the second leg for receiving a cover fastener for securing a front edge of the gutter cover to the support bracket.